



## **NEWS**

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### **Congressman Wally Herger (CA-2)**

#### **Floor Statement on Trade Adjustment Assistance Legislation**

**October 31, 2007**

Mr. Speaker, losing a job is one of the most disruptive events that can occur to a worker and family. And we should help these individuals get back to work as soon as possible. This is why I support Trade Adjustment Assistance, and why I introduced a short-term extension of the program to assist workers displaced by trade through December.

Unfortunately, I cannot support today's bill. In addition to expanding the TAA program, which already costs the American taxpayer nearly one billion dollars each year, the Majority shuts out numerous Republican suggestions that would have instilled accountability and increased flexibility for workers. One provision of their bill eliminates a state's ability to choose the best employees to administer TAA by requiring so-called state "merit-based" employees to run the program. This means that the 25 states that currently use local employees or outside contractors like non-profit or community-based groups to operate a more efficient and effective TAA program will no longer be able to do so, and will have to hire more government workers.

I am amazed that the Majority rejected our proposal to increase accountability by requiring states and organizations that receive TAA to meet performance measures. It should be the goal of all Members to see that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely, and the lack of such measures is a fundamental shortcoming of the bill. This provision is included in the Republican substitute that we will offer later today.

Far from forcing workers into "just any old job," Republicans have worked to find constructive ways to increase TAA program flexibility so workers could have more options to train for a new job and have greater access to employment services. But these suggestions were rejected by the Majority. We all want to help unemployed workers get back on their feet quickly. But TAA improvement - and especially an expansion of this magnitude - should have been considered in the context of expanding trade opportunities for all Americans through our pending Free Trade Agreements, including Colombia, Panama and South Korea, and reauthorization of Trade Promotion Authority.

Regrettably, we have no commitments from the Majority on these important measures despite months of work. I urge my colleagues to reject H.R. 3920 and yield back the balance of my time.